

utah transportation 2030

State of Utah Long Range Transportation Plan

January 2004

utahtransportation2030

Utah Department of Transportation:

John R. Njord, PE, Executive Director

Carlos M. Braceras, PE, Deputy Director

Max J. Ditlevsen, Program Development Director

Utah Transportation Commission:

Glen E. Brown, Chairman

Bevan K. Wilson

Stephen M. Bodily

Ken Warnick

Hal M. Clyde

Jerry B. Lewis

Jan C. Wells

UDOT Planning Team:

Glen O. Ames, PE, Transportation Planning Engineer

Kelli Bacon, Transportation Planner

Elden Bingham, CPM, Air Quality Coordinator

Wayne A. Jager, PE, Transportation Planning Engineer

Michael Kaczorowski, PE, Transportation Planning Engineer

Daniel B. Kuhn, Freight Planner

Kevin P. Nichol, PE, MPA, Planning Manager

Robert H. Parry, Senior Transportation Planner

Brett Slater, Rotational Engineer

M. Walter Steinvorth, MURP, Planning Manager

A. Matthew Swapp, PE, Planning Manager

Lee Theobald, CPM, Transportation Planner

John H. Thomas, PE, Engineer for Planning Operations

Paul R. Vidmar, PE, Transportation Planning Engineer

Sandy Weinrauch, MSW, Public Involvement

Transportation 2030 Document Team:

Parsons Brinckerhoff

Penna Powers Brian Haynes

Precision Litho

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:	Guiding Principles.....	1
Chapter 2:	Community Outreach and Early Public Involvement.....	13
Chapter 3:	Highways	19
Chapter 4:	Transit and Passenger Rail	41
Chapter 5:	Aviation	47
Chapter 6:	Pedestrians and Bicycles	53
Chapter 7:	Transportation Demand Management.....	59
Chapter 8:	Intelligent Transportation Systems	63
Chapter 9:	Freight.....	73
Chapter 10:	Rest Areas and Rest Stops	85
Chapter 11:	Corridor Visioning	89

Executive Summary

Appendix

CHAPTER 1 KEY POINTS

Future growth in Utah is a clearly understood fact. As statewide populations increase, the amount of travel continues to increase. UDOT is committed to providing optimum levels of mobility on well-maintained, safe facilities.

It is also critical for alternative transportation modes to enhance individual mobility. As such, Transportation 2030 approaches statewide transportation planning from a multimodal perspective. To make implementation successful, UDOT is focusing on four strategic goals during the planning stage.



[Click here for the UDOT Planning webpage.](#)

Chapter 1 Guiding Principles

1.1 UDOT Mission Statement

The mission of the Utah Department of Transportation is:

Quality Transportation Today,

Better Transportation Tomorrow,

We Work to Connect Communities.

This mission statement provides direction for UDOT's activities. UDOT's efforts to accomplish this mission focus on connecting communities, applying context-sensitive solutions with our community partners and accomplishing the following four strategic goals:

- Take care of what we have
- Make it work better
- Improve safety
- Increase capacity

To accomplish this, we need a plan.

1.2 The Need for a Plan

Our first challenge as the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is to analyze, understand, and prioritize the transportation challenges we face. Population and travel demand in Utah will keep growing and continue to pose significant demands on the transportation system. To meet these demands, UDOT has developed Transportation 2030. This is a long-range plan that outlines a broad approach to providing transportation options throughout Utah.

In planning and implementing improvements to Utah's existing transportation system, the crucial issue of population growth and resulting transportation needs must be addressed. Both the types of transportation infrastructure needed and the choices of land use made to address growth are directly and inseparably related. UDOT is responsible for planning for growth impacts on the state transportation system. UDOT does not have authority over land-use decisions nor are we responsible for addressing population growth, but we are committed to maintaining open dialogue with the local agencies holding that responsibility. In this way, land-use planning and transportation planning can be coordinated to find the best solutions for both property access and preserving mobility on the transportation system.

1.1



1.2

UDOT's first challenge is to analyze, understand, and prioritize the transportation challenges we face.



Increased population creates a need for more transportation capacity and options.

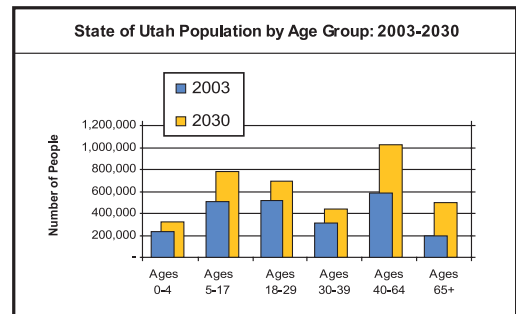
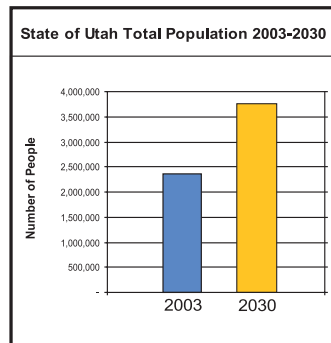
Rapid population growth and increasing travel demand drive the need for a long-term transportation plan.

The number of Utah drivers is expected to increase 65% by 2030.

Planning transportation in Utah is a monumental task and cannot be done by one group or agency alone. UDOT works closely with communities; local, state, and federal agencies; as well as non-governmental agencies to determine current and projected transportation needs and evaluate the best way to meet those needs. Our primary partners in this effort are Utah's four metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The role of MPOs is discussed in greater detail in Section 1.7. The MPOs have the lead role for planning capacity enhancements to the transportation system within the urbanized areas of the Wasatch Front, Cache Valley, and Utah's Dixie. UDOT focuses on statewide planning efforts, particularly in rural areas, and is a key partner with the MPOs in planning for urbanized areas. Each MPO prepares its own long-range plan, which is incorporated by reference into Transportation 2030, the statewide plan. As part of the effort to better coordinate with local agencies, UDOT is a partner in Envision Utah, a non-profit organization established in January 1997 dedicated to addressing potential growth-related impacts to the quality of life in Utah. This public/private partnership of citizens, business leaders and policy-makers has developed a publicly supported Quality Growth Strategy, or *"a vision to protect Utah's environment, economic strength, and quality of life."*

Population Growth Analysis

Current population growth projections indicate that the state of Utah will grow from 2.3 million to 3.7 million residents by 2030.

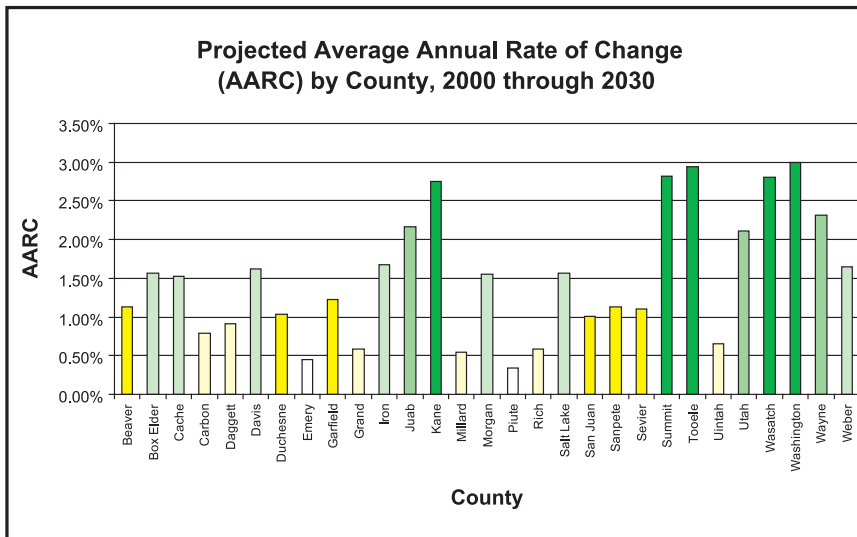


Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
Demographic and Economic Analysis
January 2002

As the preceding graphs show, in 2030 many more people will need transportation facilities. Utah's 1.6 million drivers (16 and older) will grow to over 2.6 million by 2030—an increase of 65 percent. Regardless of which transportation modes may be popular in the future, there will be many more users.

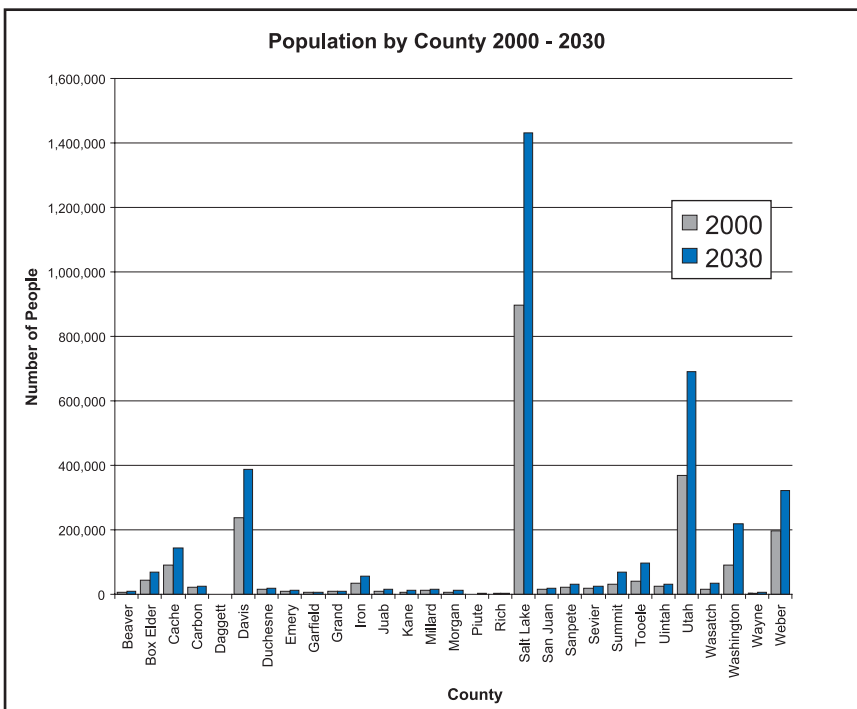
The greater St. George area in Washington County is one of Utah's high-growth areas. This county grew from approximately 26,000 residents in 1980 to more than 90,000 in 2000, and is expected to exceed 218,000 by 2030. Washington County's population is predicted to experience an Average Annual Rate of Change (AARC) of 2.99 percent from 2000 to 2030.

Although Washington County will most likely be the fastest growing county in Utah, the rest of the state will also continue to experience similar growth patterns. The state population's AARC is expected to be approximately 1.76 percent per year.



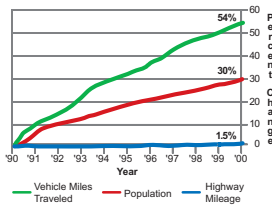
Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
Demographic and Economic Analysis
January 2002

The preceding graph shows that growth rates will be faster in some counties and slower in others. However, growth rates alone do not paint a complete picture. Although Salt Lake County will have a moderate 1.5 percent growth rate, it will continue to dominate the state's population in 2030 because of its current population base. Smaller counties such as Kane, Summit, Tooele, and Wasatch are among the fastest growing counties, but their population will remain relatively small in comparison, as shown in the following graph.



Source: Governor's Office of Planning and Budget
Demographic and Economic Analysis
January 2002

UDOT's challenge is to enhance individual mobility while responding to the traveling public's increasing demand for resources.



The amount of travel that occurs continues to increase at a rate faster than the rate of population growth.



UDOT is committed to maintaining and improving the state's highway system.



Types of transportation used at least once a week:

- 97.7% car, truck, van
- 2.6 % motorcycle
- 11.3% bus or light rail
- 13.2% bicycle
- 25.4% walk

Source: USU Benchmark Study, Phase 1, 2003

Increasing Transportation Demand

As the state's population continues to increase, transportation demand is another factor that affects the transportation system. The amount of travel that occurs continues to increase at a rate faster than the rate of population growth.

This indicates that mobility is a cornerstone of our society. Mobility contributes to economic growth and quality of life, but increases in travel demand have the potential to also increase demands for natural, financial, land, and other resources. The future challenge and opportunity for UDOT and the state of Utah will be in continuing to enhance mobility while minimizing the impact on our resources.

Addressing Mobility Needs

UDOT plans to work in two areas to address mobility needs throughout the transportation system and achieve our strategic goals. Although complementary, these areas can sometimes be in competition for limited resources. UDOT will carefully consider each and work toward an optimal balance between them in order to successfully meet Utah's transportation demand.

Highway Stewardship

Stewardship over the state highway system is where UDOT is most experienced and has the greatest direct control. This is appropriate because UDOT was originally created as the State Roads Department. At that time, Utahns saw the need to add well-maintained highways to the transportation system to enhance farm-to-market connectivity; provide greater mobility, flexibility, and accessibility; and allow competitive alternatives to existing private transportation systems. Large investments have been made over the ensuing decades, both on a federal and a state level, to create a system with almost unlimited access and a high degree of mobility. The State Roads Department committed to this proposition nearly a century ago, resulting in the world-class highway system we presently enjoy. UDOT remains committed to maintaining, preserving, and enhancing this system to address growing demands for passenger and freight movement.

Managing Demand and Enhancing Alternatives

In order to fully address current and future travel demand in Utah and maintain overall mobility, there is a need to improve and promote alternative methods of transportation and to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per person. Single-occupant vehicles (SOVs) make up a large percentage of the modal choices now used to meet travel demand. SOVs have traditionally been the definition of individual mobility, but recent studies indicate there may be other factors involved. To be successful, the transportation system will need to include options that will enhance individual mobility and provide choices — a multimodal system. Solutions may include: expanded bus and light-rail networks; bus rapid transit; commuter, intercity and interstate passenger rail; bicycle route networks; pedestrian accessibility considerations; efficient passenger and freight intermodal connections; freight rail mobility considerations; and telecommuting, flexible or alternative work hours.

A balanced, multimodal transportation system is important to UDOT. UDOT recognizes that the mobility expectations of Utahns will continue to evolve and will likely include increased interest in new modal choices outside the traditional highway stewardship. Although most of UDOT's federal funding and all its state funds are tied

directly to highways, we are committed to open communication with all transportation providers, public and private, to ensure a seamless network of options for personal and commercial transportation. UDOT is also committed to offering leadership over all aspects of the statewide transportation system and providing a central clearinghouse for system-wide planning.

UDOT plays the critical role of being a leader in all aspects of the statewide transportation system and providing a central clearinghouse for system-wide transportation planning.

1.3 Context Sensitive Solutions

1.3

In July 2001, UDOT adopted the Context Sensitive Solutions philosophy (CSS) to guide our approach to doing business. Although formalized at that time, the CSS philosophy has been evolving over time within the Department, as it has become clear that considerations in addition to highway design standards must be weighed in making system decisions that connect communities and preserve and improve our quality of life.

Three Principles of Context Sensitive Solutions

Context Sensitive Solutions is about understanding community values and finding transportation solutions while considering the context where those solutions will take place, as defined by three principles:

- Meet Transportation Needs
- Be a Community Asset
- Fit the Natural and Built Environment

Practically speaking, there is a dynamic balance between these principles that will be different for any given project and community. UDOT's challenge in our commitment to CSS will be to find solutions that attain the optimal balance in each instance, while achieving our four strategic goals. This defines a successful project.

CSS for transportation issues includes a process that:

- Identifies community values early in the process
- Understands the context
- Uses collaborative decision-making to connect communities and improve quality of life
- Balances the community, the environment, and the transportation system

Long-Range Planning, Public Involvement, and CSS

In order for CSS to succeed, strategies that address the principles above must be implemented during statewide long-range planning. During the planning stage, feasible non-highway solutions can be considered and the context and vision of a given corridor can be defined.

The cornerstone of CSS is community involvement. Understanding community values is essential to balancing the transportation solution with the community and natural environments. Collaborative decision-making with the community creates a positive environment to meet community goals.

Before planning decisions are made and projects are funded, public involvement helps define what each community considers to be assets. With public input, the potential impact of transportation demand reduction strategies and/or various modal alternatives can be effectively evaluated. Through public involvement, UDOT can identify



Through public involvement, UDOT can identify community needs and concerns during the early stages of project development.

Asset management is key to UDOT's goal to "take care of what we have."

UDOT will make informed recommendations to the Transportation Commission about spending available funds, balancing new construction with preservation activities, and preserving taxpayer investments made in the existing infrastructure.

1.4

1.4 Transportation Asset Management

community needs and concerns during the early stages of project development. These concerns should be considered prior to mode selection, alignment determination, or project definition.

By responding to public input and implementing CSS principles, UDOT's working relationships with partnering agencies and communities will continue to improve. This may help avoid last-minute issues that can impede projects that address transportation needs.

UDOT is making asset management a key component of its decision-making processes. Asset management is key to our goal to "take care of what we have." Transportation Asset Management is a strategic approach to managing the existing transportation infrastructure.

The *FHWA Asset Management Primer* (December 1999) provides a working definition of asset management:

"Asset management is a systematic process of maintaining, upgrading, and operating physical assets cost-effectively. It combines engineering principles with sound business practices and economic theory, and it provides tools to facilitate a more organized, logical approach to decision-making. Thus, asset management provides a framework for handling both short- and long-range planning."

Asset management provides a systematic, fact-based, reproducible approach to analyzing tradeoffs between investment and improvement alternatives. Using this approach, UDOT can compare and balance the technical, financial, and political factors that affect decisions.

UDOT is responsible for billions of dollars worth of assets, including right-of-way, structures, pavement, signs, and signals. Governmental accounting has historically handled assets on a cash basis: once cash was expended for an asset, it was considered a "sunk" cost. Highways and other transportation facilities and amenities were not placed on the books, inventoried, or valued each year.

Business practice provides a more realistic current value of assets, based on their useful life and appraisal of their condition. By using a modified version of the business model in placing a value on its infrastructure improvements, UDOT will make informed recommendations to the Transportation Commission about spending available funds, balancing new construction with preservation activities, and preserving taxpayer investments made in the existing infrastructure.

The structure of UDOT's Transportation Asset Management Program is currently under development. It is anticipated to be based on automated systems equipped with comprehensive analysis tools that operate on integrated data UDOT routinely collects. These systems will prioritize activities based on the objectives outlined in Transportation 2030. They will complement UDOT's existing decision-making processes and organizational structure, functioning cohesively and consistently to effectively manage transportation system assets.

1.5

1.5 Federal Requirements

In addition to the direction provided by UDOT's mission, Title 23 of the United States Code, as amended by the Transportation Equity Act of 1998 (TEA-21), requires seven areas be considered in the transportation planning process. The areas are:

- Support the economic vitality of the United States, the States, and metropolitan areas, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency

- Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users
- Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and improve quality of life
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the state, for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

UDOT has created Transportation 2030 giving full consideration to these requirements.

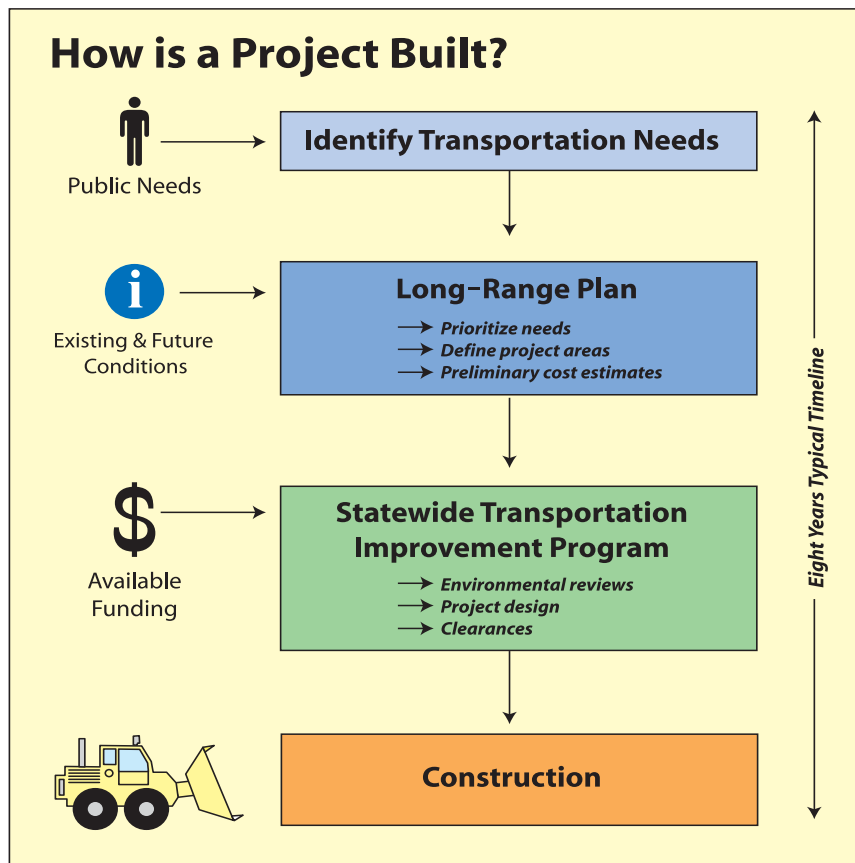
Transportation planning considerations:

- Economic Vitality
- Safety
- Accessibility
- Environment
- Connectivity
- Efficiency
- Preservation

1.6 Statewide Project Selection Process

1.6

Transportation 2030 is the first step in UDOT's project selection process. Transportation needs across the state are identified through data analysis, public involvement, corridor studies, and the direct experience of the UDOT Regions and other divisions. These transportation needs are prioritized according to UDOT's goals, and planning-level project concepts and cost estimates are drafted to address the needs. General revenue projections are developed and project lists are aligned to anticipated revenues by decade. Transportation 2030 will be updated in two years (2006), then every three years thereafter.



The second step in the project selection process is the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), a five-year program of projects selected for implementation from Metropolitan Planning Organizations' (MPOs) long-range plans and Transportation 2030. The projects brought forward from the long-range plans to the STIP have the best near-term feasibility and priority to the state and region, can be linked to a specific funding source, and are consistent with UDOT's goals. According to federal regulations, a project added to the STIP must come from an approved long-range plan. Newly discovered high-priority needs require a long-range plan amendment before they may be added to the STIP. FHWA requires that the STIP be updated at least every two years. UDOT performs annual updates.

During the STIP period, projects are evaluated in greater detail to:

- Establish funding sources
- Complete environmental review processes
- Design the project
- Secure right-of-way and other clearances
- Initiate construction

Once a project moves from long-range plans to the STIP, it is likely to be constructed. However, unanticipated environmental findings, large project cost increases, or reductions in expected funding can change this.

1.7

1.7 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

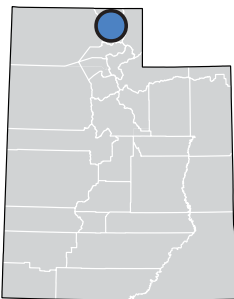
To better coordinate planning activities between state and local agencies in urbanized areas (as defined by the U.S. Census), the Governor designates a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for urbanized areas with populations over 50,000. UDOT's responsibility within MPO areas includes serving on MPO councils and committees, reviewing the planning processes, and balancing local needs and desires with the state-administered transportation system's needs.

Four designated MPOs in Utah are responsible for planning the transportation system within their respective boundaries. Each MPO prepares a separate long-range plan that is adopted as part of the overall statewide plan. Each MPO also prepares its own Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is adopted into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). A copy of each MPO's long-range plan is available for review in Appendix D on the CD.

Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO)

The Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO) is a voluntary organization of governments intended to foster a cooperative effort in providing for the transportation needs of the Cache Valley region. The goal of the organization is to retain and strengthen the jurisdiction of each local agency while combining the total resources of the group for regional challenges beyond individual capabilities.

The CMPO serves the northern Utah communities of Hyde Park, Hyrum, Logan, Millville, Nibley, North Logan, Providence, River Heights, Smithfield, Wellsville, and portions of unincorporated Cache County. The Logan Urbanized Area (LUA) is



CMPO
www.cmpo.info

approximately 16 miles long, extending from north of Smithfield to Wellsville on the south, and seven miles wide between the National Forest boundaries on the east and the west side of Logan. The CMPO boundary encompasses an area of approximately 115 square miles. The current population of the LUA is about 80,000.

The CMPO is organized as an "umbrella-type" agency made up of representatives designated by each of the member communities and by Cache County, Logan Transit District, and the Utah Department of Transportation.

Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC)

The Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) provides planning services to Davis, Morgan, Salt Lake, Tooele, and Weber Counties. WFRC is also the designated MPO for the Salt Lake and Ogden-Layton urbanized areas. It is a governing board of 18 elected officials from local governments, appointed by the Councils of Governments (COG) in each of the listed counties.

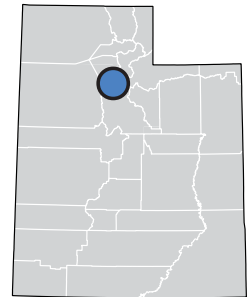
The Regional Council, based on recommendations from the WFRC's Regional Growth Committee (RGC), recently approved changes to its committee structure, affecting the RGC and the Transportation Coordinating Committee (Trans Com), and to the Regional Transportation Planning Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). The MOA identifies the respective responsibilities of WFRC, UDOT, Utah Transportation Commission, and Utah Transit Authority (UTA), and the type of cooperative relationships between these agencies relative to the region's long-range transportation planning process.

The RGC has responsibility for development of the region's Long-Range Transportation Plan. It is a policy advisory body to the Regional Council and is comprised primarily of local elected officials and of representatives from the Transportation Commission, UTA Board and executive staff, UDOT executive staff, FHWA, Salt Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, Quality Growth Commission, Envision Utah, Utah League of Cities and Towns, Utah Association of Counties, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, State Air Quality Board, private sector/business community, and staff of each COG. The RGC is also responsible for the Regional Corridor Preservation Committee, the Transit 2030 Committee, and two Technical Committees, comprised generally of local planners, one each for the Ogden/Layton and the Salt Lake Urbanized Areas.

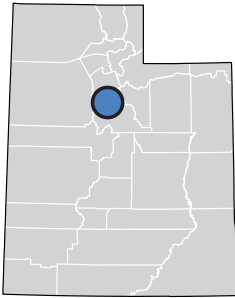
Trans Com has responsibility for short-range transportation planning, programming, and special transportation planning projects and studies. Trans Com is also a policy advisory body to the Regional Council and is comprised primarily of local elected officials and of representatives from Transportation Commission, UDOT executive staff, UTA Board and executive staff, FHWA, and State Air Quality Board. Trans Com also has responsibility for two Technical Committees, one from each urbanized area, that are generally comprised of local engineers.

Each of the committees described above have the ability to create ad hoc committees and/or add to its membership as needed.

UDOT, UTA, and other local, state, and federal agencies that provide transportation facilities for the public work with WFRC to prepare transportation management plans and programs. WFRC also receives input from its advisory committees and the public.



WFRC
www.wfrc.org



MAG
www.mountainland.org

Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG)

The Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) provides planning services to Summit, Utah, and Wasatch counties. The Utah Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (UVMPO), which is responsible for long-range planning for the Utah County urbanized area, is one function of MAG.

The Mountainland Executive Council is UVMPO's governing body, comprised of mayors and county commissioners from Summit, Utah, and Wasatch Counties. This Executive Council established a Utah Valley Planning Committee to provide advice on urban transportation planning matters, review the Long-Range Plan, and direct staff functions. The Utah Valley Planning Committee is comprised of city and county elected officials; members of the Utah Transportation Commission, the UTA Board of Trustees and the Board of the Utah Division of Air Quality; and non-voting representatives from MAG staff, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the commercial freight industry.

UVMPO's Utah Valley Technical Advisory Committee was established to advise the Utah Valley Planning Committee on technical issues and give suggestions for the Long Range Plan. This committee is comprised of engineers, planners, and technicians from each of the participating agencies, including UDOT. MAG staff serves as a liaison between the Technical and Planning Committees.

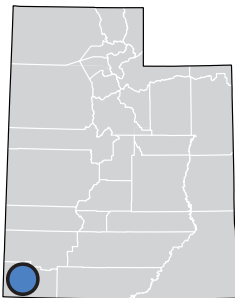
Dixie MPO

The Dixie MPO was created in October 2002 to perform planning for St. George, Santa Clara, Washington, Ivins, and the portions of unincorporated Washington County located within the projected growth paths of these cities.

The Dixie Transportation Executive Council (DTEC) consists of eight elected or appointed officials: three represent the smaller member cities, three represent St. George, one represents Washington County, and the final seat is held by a Utah Transportation Commission member. Ex-officio status is also extended to Hurricane City, Five County Association of Governments (AOG), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The DTEC acts as the policy body coordinating and directing transportation planning, implementation, and related activities. The DTEC Chair is selected by a majority vote of the members.

The Dixie Technical Advisory Committee (DTAC) is composed of technical and managerial staff representatives from each of the agencies represented on the DTEC, including the ex-officio organizations. The DTAC conducts technical reviews and analyses of all annual transportation planning activities and any related issues specified by the DTEC. They advise the DTEC on appropriate actions to be taken. Committee membership mirrors the DTEC.

The Dixie Transportation Planning Office is hosted by the Five County Association of Governments and performs planning functions for the Dixie MPO.



Dixie MPO

1.8 Transportation and Air Quality Conformity

1.8

Long-range transportation planning must address population growth and society's value of individual mobility. One implication of growth, particularly in urban core areas (Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah Counties), is air quality.

A formal interagency consultation process involving the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and state and local transportation and air quality agencies is required in developing state air plans, regional transportation plans, and regional transportation programs.

Regional emissions are estimated based on highway and transit usage, according to transportation plans and programs. Projected emissions for the plans and programs must not exceed the emissions limits established by the state's air quality plans. If projected mobile source emissions do not conform to the limits defined by the state through emission testing, then programming of federal transportation funds for new capacity projects is halted in that region until the emissions can be controlled.

Local and state officials are continually considering how projects in these urban areas affect air quality. The plans and programs they implement include available options for offsetting or reducing motor vehicle emissions, as required. Examples of mobile source emission controls include transit improvements, High-Occupancy Vehicle lanes, signal timing, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

UDOT has incorporated HOV lanes on I-15 in Salt Lake County and is considering expanding HOV lanes into Utah County. Air quality impacts must be addressed in the project planning stage to assure regional air quality emissions do not exceed allowable emission limits.

During the preconstruction/National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, UDOT considers the effects of individual federally funded or approved highway and transit projects on air quality in carbon monoxide and particulate matter nonattainment and maintenance areas.

What is Transportation Conformity?

Transportation conformity is a way to ensure that federal funding and approval are given to transportation activities that are consistent with air quality goals.

According to the Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977, transportation plans, programs, and projects cannot:

- Create new violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
- Increase the frequency or severity of existing NAAQS violations
- Delay attainment of the NAAQS

If an area cannot meet the NAAQS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates it as a nonattainment area. The state is required to develop an air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) describing how and when it will attain the NAAQS. When a nonattainment area meets the NAAQS, it is redesignated as a maintenance area for two ten-year periods.



Transportation and air quality are a delicate balance.

1.9 Transportation and the Environment

After funding is matched to projects and they are transferred from the statewide and MPO long-range transportation plans to the STIP, environmental evaluations begin during the project development process. Information gathered through transportation planning activities provides essential data to be used for the purpose, need, and alternatives sections of environmental documents. This may include such data as travel demand, geometric deficiencies, safety, access control, and facility conditions as well as public involvement, CSS, and knowledge of environmental conditions. Planning information can form the basis for specific environmental impact analysis.

The environmental process must comply with environmental laws, statutes, regulations, orders, and NEPA. Environmental studies include examination and disclosure of the likely effects of proposed transportation actions. FHWA audits the NEPA process and reviews and approves environmental documents. Early and continuous coordination with our community partners during the planning and environmental processes produces transportation decisions that consider potential impacts on the human and natural environment.

The classification of NEPA documents includes the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Categorical Exclusion (CE), and Environmental Assessment (EA). The EIS process addresses projects that have a significant impact on the environment. This process requires a Notice of Intent (NOI), Draft EIS, Final EIS, and a Record of Decision (ROD). The CE serves as the environmental classification for projects that have been determined to have no significant impact due to type, location, or scope. An EA is prepared when the significance of the project's impacts is not known or clearly identified. The EA process will either result in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or it will transition to a full EIS process if significant impacts are identified. Public involvement and hearings are required during EIS and EA analysis and may occur with some types of CE documents. The EIS and EA processes result in the decision and selection of a preferred alternative through comprehensive environmental analysis.

Mitigation commitments and agreements are made as part of the decision-making process. All projects, including the CE, incorporate mitigation for environmental impacts. Examples of environmental mitigation may include restoration of community circulation and pedestrian patterns, traffic control, relocation and housing considerations, noise abatement, wetland restoration, historic preservation, and landscaping provisions. Final design, right-of-way acquisition, and advertisement for construction bids are authorized after the appropriate environmental documentation is completed.